

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
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INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
USUN NEW YORK 2061

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13658

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, IN, BG  
SUBJECT: FARAKKA: INDIAN VERSION OF THE TALKS  
  
REF: NEW DELHI 13537

SUMMARY: COMMENTING ON THE RECENT DELHI TALKS ON THE FARAKKA DISPUTE, THE MEA DESK OFFICER FOR BANGLADESH SAID THAT THE BDG WAS INTENT ON INTERNATIONALIZING THE PROBLEM. HE CLAIMED THAT THE BDG NEGOTIATING TEAM REFUSED TO OFFER REASONS FOR REJECTING THE LINK CANAL. CONTRARY TO A BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION SOURCE, THE GOI WAS WILLING TO CONSIDER THE BDG PROPOSAL FOR RESERVOIRS ON THE GANGES BUT MAINTAINED THAT TECHNICAL STUDY OF THE PROPOSAL WAS REQUIRED. THE MEA OFFICIAL SAID THAT INDIA OFFERED TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT FOR THE SHARING OF WATER DURING THE LEAN SEASONS WHICH THE BANGLADESH TEAM REJECTED MAINTAINING THAT A SHORT-TERM AGREEMENT HAD TO BE WITHIN THE "FRAMEWORK" OF A LONG-TERM SOLUTION. FOLLOWING THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TALKS, THE INDIAN PRESS HAS EDITORIALY ATTACKED THE BDG FOR USING THE FARAKKA DISPUTE FOR DIVERSIONARY POLITICAL ENDS. THE DEPUTY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER HAS ALSO PUBLICLY CRITICIZED  
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THE BDG FOR NOT BEING INTERESTED IN A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION

OF THE PROBLEM. THE GOI HAS NOW ISSUED ITS "WHITE PAPER"  
ON THE FARAKKA DISPUTE. END SUMMARY.

1. REVIEWING RECENTLY HELD TALKS IN NEW DELHI ON FARAKKA DISPUTE, MEA DESK OFFICER FOR BANGLADESH TOLD EMBOFF THAT IN AGREEING TO THE TALKS BDG HAD NO INTENTION OF SEEKING A SOLUTION. RATHER, HE SAID, THE BANGLADESHIS ARE INTENT ON INTERNATIONALIZING THE PROBLEM FOR INTERANAL POLITICAL REASONS. NOT SURPRISINGLY THE INDIAN OFFICIAL OFFERED A VERY DIFFERENT VERSION OF WHAT TOOK PLACE AT THE DELHI TALKS COMPARED TO THE BDG VERSIONS REPORTED FROM DACCA AND REFTEL.

2. IT IS CLEAR THAT BOTH SIDES ARE MILES APART IN TERMS OF AN APPROPRIATE LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. CONTRARY TO OUR BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION SOURCE, THE MEA OFFICIAL STATED THAT THE BANGLADESH TEAM FAILED TO OFFER REASONS FOR REFUSING TO CONSIDER A LINK CANAL. MOREOVER, THE GOI HAD NOT REFUSED TO CONSIDER THE BANGLADESH PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF RESERVOIRS ON THE GANGES. THE INDIAN TEAM REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE PROPOSAL REQUIRED TECHNICAL STUDY.

3. THE QUESTION BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH ON A SHORT-TERM SOLUTION SEEMS TO TURN AROUND THE BDG'S CONTENTION THAT INDIA HAS NO RIGHT TO REGULATE THE FLOW OF WATER UNILATERALLY. HOWEVER, THE MEA OFFICIAL CLAIMED THAT THE INDIAN TEAM AGREED TO NEGOTIATE THE FLOW OF WATER FOR THE LEAN SEASON, ALONG THE LINES OF THE APRIL 1975 AGREEMENT, WHEN INDIA WITHDREW BETWEEN 11 TO 16,000 CUSECS. IN ADDITION, THE GOI IS WILLING TO STATE SUCH AN AGREEMENT IN TERMS OF THE AMOUNT BANGLADESH IS TO RECEIVE DURING THE LEAN PERIOD RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF WHAT INDIA WILL WITHDRAW. THE BANGLADESH TEAM REPORTEDLY REFUSED THE OFFER OF SUCH A SHORT-TERM SOLUTION, INSISTING THAT A SHORT-TERM AGREEMENT HAD TO BE WITHIN THE "FRAMEWORK" OF A LONG-TERM SOLUTION.

4. IN PARA 4 DACCA 4798 THE COMMENT WAS MADE THAT 40,000 CUSECS WERE DIVERTED BY INDIA AT FARAKKA DURING THE DRY SEASON. THE GOI STATES THAT 40,000 CUSECS IS THE MAXIMUM  
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OFF-TAKE OF THE FEEDER CANAL FROM FARAKKA AND THAT ON MARCH 27, 1976 (THE BEGINNING OF THE DRY SEASON ACCORDING TO THE INDIANS) IT REDUCED ITS OFF-TAKE FROM FARAKKA. THE GOI HAS NEVER STATED THE AMOUNT OF THIS REDUCED OFF-TAKE, AND WHEN ASKED ABOUT IT, THE MEA DESK OFFICER REPLIED THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO SUPPLY THE ANSWER. (HE WAS, HOWEVER, FULL OF NUMBERS ABOUT JUST EVERYTHING ELSE.)

5. IN ADDITION TO A SPATE OF EDITORIALS IN THE INDIAN PRESS FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF THE DELHI TALKS, WHICH CRITICIZE THE BDG FOR EXPLOITING THE FARAKKA DISPUTE AS A DIVERSIONARY POLITICAL TACTIC, THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, BIPIN PAL DAS, HAS NOW SPOKEN OUT PUBLICLY ON THE DISPUTE. HE TOLD THE PRESS AT CALCUTTA AIRPORT ON SEPTEMBER 11 THAT THE BANGLADESH TEAM TO THE DELHI TALKS REFUSED TO EXAMINE THE INDIAN PROPOSALS. "THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED IN FINDING A REASONABLE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM THROUGH DISCUSSIONS AND WERE DETERMINED TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE ISSUE... BANGLADESH HAS ALL ALONG BEEN TRYING TO MAKE IT A POLITICAL PROBLEM." SPEAKING IN ASSAM ON SEPTEMBER 13, DAS SAID THAT INDIA WOULD NOT ALLOW THE CALCUTTA PORT TO GO DRY. HE DEPLORED THE ANTI-INDIAN PROPAGANDA BY BANGLADESH ON THE BORDER ISSUE: "IF THEY FAIL TO CONTROL INSURGENCY AND BRING ABOUT STABILITY THEY SHOULD NOT TRY TO MAKE INDIA A SCAPEGOAT FOR THEIR INTERNAL FAILURES. WE WANT TO SEE POLITICAL STABILITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROGRESS IN BANGLADESH. ANY INSURGENCY IN BANGLADESH WILL HAVE REPERCUSSIONS IN INDIA." DAS IS LATER REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT "INTERVENTION BY A THIRD PARTY" WOULD NOT SOLVE PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

6. MEA HAS NOW ISSUED THE INDIAN "WHITE PAPER" ON THE FARAKKA DISPUTE. IT RESTATES IN REASONED, RESTRAINED LANGUAGE ALL OF THE ARGUMENTS WHICH THE GOI HAS PREVIOUSLY ADVANCED. COPIES ARE BEING POUCHED TO NEA/INS AND DACCA. SAXBE

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